

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

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FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9182

INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, GY

SUBJECT: WHITE PAPER ON NATIONAL SERVICE PRESENTED TO NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

REF: GEORGETOWN 1848

1. SUMMARY: AT DECEMBER 20 SESSION OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER PTOLEMY REID PRESENTED WHITE PAPER ON NATIONAL SERVICE. WHITE PAPER ADVANCES AMBITIOUS PLAN TO INVOLVE ALL GUYANESE IN PROCESS OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT BUT STOPS SHORT OF CONTROVERSIAL COMPULSORY SERVICE IN INITIAL STAGES. END SUMMARY.

2. IN DECEMBER 20 SESSION OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER PTOLEMY REID PRESENTED LONG AWAITED AND MUCH DEBATED WHITE PAPER ON NATIONAL SERVICE. REID STRESSED NATIONAL SERVICE WILL BE PRINCIPAL INSTRUMENT TO PRODUCE TYPE OF GUYANESE MEN AND WOMEN NEEDED TO TRANSFORM NATION INTO SELF-RELIANT, SELF-DISCIPLINED PEOPLE.

3. ACCORDING TO WHITE PAPER, NATIONAL SERVICE WILL BE DIRECT
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RESPONSIBILITY OF PRIME MINISTER. PM AND PERSONS TO BE NOMINATED BY HIM WILL COMPRISE NATIONAL SERVICE BOARD WHICH

WILL FORMULATE POLICY AND ISSUE ORDERS TO NATIONAL SERVICE SECRETARIAT HEADED BY DIRECTOR GENERAL. ASSISTING DIRECTOR GENERAL WILL BE TWO NATIONAL SERVICE OFFICERS WHO WILL HEAD FIELD AND PLANNING DIVISIONS OF NATIONAL SERVICE.

4. FIELD DIVISION WILL CONSIST OF FOLLOWING CORPS:

A. YOUNG BRIGADE-SCHOOL CHILDREN AGES EIGHT TO FOURTEEN WHO WILL RECEIVE AGRICULTURAL AND COOPERATIVE TRAINING IN SCHOOL AND PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE IN FIELD ON WEEKENDS AND DURING VACATIONS.

B. NATIONAL CADET CORPS--YOUTHS AGES TWELVE TO EIGHTEEN IN SECONDARY TECHNICAL, OR AGRICULTURAL SCHOOLS WHO WILL CONTINUE AT HIGHER LEVEL TRAINING BEGUN IN YOUNG BRIGADE.

C. NEW OPPORTUNITY CORPS--YOUTHS UP TO AGE SIXTEEN IN REFORM SCHOOLS WHO WILL RECEIVE NATIONAL SERVICE TRAINING AND SPECIAL CORRECTIVE TRAINING.

D. PIONEER CORPS--ALL YOUTHS AGES EIGHTEEN TO TWENTY-FIVE AND YOUTHS AGES FOURTEEN TO EIGHTEEN NOT IN SCHOOL WHO WILL RECEIVE ONE YEAR TRAINING WITH GUYANA DEFENSE FORCE.

E. SPECIAL SERVICE CORPS--PERSONS WITH PROFESSIONAL SKILLS WHO MAY BE CALLED ON FOR SHORT EMERGENCY ASSIGNMENTS.

F. NATIONAL RESERVE CORPS--ALL FORMER MEMBERS OF PIONEER CORPS WHO MAY BE CALLED TO ACTIVE SERVICE IF NEEDED.

5. PLANNING DIVISION WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR LOGISTICS, RECRUITMENT, PREPARATION OF SETTLEMENTS AND LIAISON WITH OTHER DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES.

6. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL SERVICE ENVISAGES THAT ONLY PIONEER CORPS WILL GO INTO OPERATION IMMEDIATELY AND IT WILL CONSIST INITIALLY OF TWO THOUSAND VOLUNTEERS. OTHER GROUPS WILL BEGIN ONLY AFTER SUFFICIENT STAFF HAVE BEEN TRAINED TO DIRECT PROGRAMS. WHITE PAPER
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FURTHER STATES THAT SELF-SUFFICIENT AGRICULTURAL SETTLEMENTS IN HINTERLAND WILL ULTIMATELY FORM FUNDAMENTAL FEATURE OF NATIONAL SERVICE AND DEVELOPMENT.

7. COMMENT: WHILE NATIONAL SERVICE MUST STILL BE PUT INTO LEGISLATIVE FORM, IT IS CLEAR FROM WHITE PAPER THAT MOST CONTROVERSIAL ASPECTS OF PLAN, COMPULSION AND TRAINING OF CHILDREN, HAVE BEEN AT LEAST TEMPORARILY SHELVED. OPPOSITION IN CABINET (REFTEL) AS WELL AS HOSTILITY TOWARDS NATIONAL SERVICE THROUGHOUT COUNTRY APPEAR TO HAVE FORCED BURNHAM TO ADVANCE

MORE MODEST PLAN. KING

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